

Honda Applauds Appropriations Bill That Responsibly Funds National Priorities

Written by Mike Honda

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The bill, [H.R. 3043](#), boosts elementary school education through initiatives such as teacher training programs; funds the Veteran's Affairs Administration; improves health services in rural areas; and funds child development centers for military families, among other investments. The House approved the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education and Military Construction-VA Appropriations bill by a bi-partisan 269-142 vote and sent it to the U.S. Senate.

"This bill addresses serious gaps in vital areas such as education," said Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), a member of the House Appropriations Committee. "For years, we've had unfunded mandates such as No Child Left Behind, which demands results from schools, but does not give them resources to succeed. This bill will help bridge that gap and give our brave military families additional help in their children's education."

The bill, however, is facing a presidential veto threat upon Senate passage. Honda said the Democratic leadership and the Appropriations Committee crafted a responsible bill that ensures health and a healthy economic growth in the long run, and keeps the country safe. He added that most of the bill is just keeping vital programs on par with inflation. For example, the President wants to cut \$1.2 billion from the Department of Education, while this bill would give the department \$4.5 billion above Bush's proposal, or roughly the cost of two weeks in Iraq.

"Since Democrats took over the majority in Congress, we've refocused priorities on our country," Honda said. "This bill is barely keeping up with inflation compared to last year. For too long the Administration has ignored the nation's needs."

For example, the bill:

- Gives 117,000 more low-income children extra help with reading and math with an increase of \$1.8 billion over 2007's budget.
- Funds urgently needed maintenance for veterans' health facilities that were in appalling conditions.
- Invests 16 percent more in medical and prosthetic research for our injured war veterans, instead of accepting the President's cuts for this program.
- Funds worker safety to prevent tragedies like the one at Sago mine. The bill strengthens enforcement of laws neglected over the past six years, and increases funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration by 3 percent and the Mine Safety and Health Administration by 13 percent.
- Provides \$722 million for worker training programs, which Bush sought to slash.
- Boosts the Pell Grant for college by \$875 per student, which would help 5.5 million struggling students trying to make it into the middle class.

"These are real necessities," Honda said. "We're not funding an unnecessary war here; we're funding our kids and our future and we're giving our veterans the minimum we owe them."